

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWO MORE DEAD BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Recent Rains May Cause More Mosquito Breeding

County Vector Control officials announced today that two more dead birds tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing the total number of birds that tested positive this year to four. The two new birds were found in Spring Valley and City Heights.

"With 162 birds testing positive last year, we know the virus is widespread throughout San Diego County," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "Since mosquitoes transmit West Nile virus, it's important that residents eliminate mosquito-breeding areas, especially with the recent rain and the hot weather."

County Vector Control wants to remind residents to check their yards for standing water because these areas are the perfect place for mosquitoes to breed. Residents should dump or remove anything that can hold water, such as children's toys, old spare tires and wheelbarrows. To control mosquito larvae, residents can stock decorative pools, poorly maintained swimming pools and ponds with free, mosquito-eating fish. Free fish are available at 14 locations countywide.

The public is also encouraged to report dead birds like crows, ravens, jays, hawks or owls if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants; are not stiff; and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, have not been shot, or killed by animals.

To protect yourself from West Nile virus, stay inside when mosquitoes are most active, wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk, and when you must be outside, use an insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or oil of Eucalyptus.

To date, there have been 17 human cases of WNV reported this year in California but no deaths. In 2005 and 2006 in San Diego County, there have been no locally-acquired human cases of WNV. For more information, to report dead birds or mosquito breeding or to find out where to obtain free mosquito fish, call 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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